

## IDENTIFYING BENEFICIARIES

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the inspector general of the Social Security Administration recently issued a report taking the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to task for its failure to take steps to implement the inspector general's recommendation that the agency stop using Social Security numbers as a beneficiary identifier. I support the inspector general's efforts and would like to bring this issue to the attention of my colleagues.

Social Security numbers were originally created to administer the Social Security Program. Over time, the public and private sectors began to use Social Security numbers for a variety of other purposes.

Use of Social Security numbers is a convenient method to identify individuals. But wide-spread use of Social Security numbers also increases the risk of identity theft and fraud. In 2006, the Federal Trade Commission reported that more than 8 million Americans were victims of identity theft in the prior year.

Identity thieves can obtain an individual's personal information by stealing mail or a wallet or rummaging through your trash. That personal information can be used to obtain a credit card in your name, write bad checks from a bank account created in your name, or authorize the electronic transfer of funds from your bank account to a different account.

A Social Security number is a key piece of information used in identity thefts. Recognizing this threat, many public and private entities have taken steps to limit the use and display of Social Security numbers.

Last year, the Office of Management and Budget called on Federal agencies to safeguard personally identifiable information. It required agencies to establish plans to eliminate unnecessary collection and use of Social Security numbers and to explore alternatives to Social Security numbers.

A number of Federal agencies are reducing the use of Social Security numbers. The Department of Veterans Affairs no longer displays Social Security numbers on new veteran identification cards. The Department of Defense is issuing health cards that no longer display Social Security numbers. And the Office of Personnel Management has directed health insurers participating in the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program to eliminate Social Security numbers from insurance cards.

Unfortunately, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services continues to display Social Security numbers on Medicare identification cards. Consumers Union and others have noted this practice needlessly places Medicare beneficiaries at risk for identity theft.

The Social Security Administration urges people not to carry their Social Security cards with them in order to protect against theft. But Medicare beneficiaries are instructed to carry

their Medicare identification cards with them—cards with the very same Social Security number on them. Why would CMS increase senior citizens' vulnerability to identity theft?

I first raised this concern in 2005 and successfully offered an amendment to the Senate version of the fiscal year 2006 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill to require CMS to provide a report to Congress outlining a plan to move away from using Social Security numbers on Medicare identification cards.

CMS prepared a report and provided estimates of the cost and time it would take to switch to an identification system other than Social Security numbers. But it has failed to implement that plan.

Last month, the inspector general of the Social Security Administration issued a report that examined how CMS is responding to an IG recommendation in 2006 to remove Social Security numbers from Medicare cards. The inspector general found that CMS has not done anything beyond preparing the report to Congress.

The inspector general made his position clear. The report states:

Given the millions of individuals at risk for identity theft and OMB's directive to eliminate unnecessary uses of [Social Security numbers], we believe immediate action is needed to address this significant vulnerability.

The report also declares:

We do not believe a Federal agency should place more value on convenience than the security of its beneficiaries' personal information.

It is very disappointing that CMS is not taking recommended steps to protect Medicare beneficiaries from identity theft.

Private health insurers have moved away from using Social Security numbers. Other Federal agencies have too. It is time for CMS to do the same.

## TRIBUTE TO DR. BOBBY R. HIMES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise to note with sadness the passing of Dr. Bobby R. Himes, a retired Campbellsville University professor and star Kentuckian who will be greatly missed. After over four decades of service to his students, his community and the Commonwealth of Kentucky, he leaves behind many loved ones and a great legacy of accomplishment. He was 76 years old.

Known to students and colleagues as "Mr. Campbellsville University," Dr. Himes taught 7,940 students over his long career, according to grade books he kept in his possession. He first came to Campbellsville University in 1961 at the age of 29 and retired in 2001 as a history and political science professor. More than 4,000 Campbellsville students took his popular class "United States History Since 1877," which began in 1961.

Dr. Himes grew up in Hartford, KY, and always remained proud of his

hometown. In his recent book "Life in the Shadows of Hartford College and Campbellsville University," he wrote, "I could not have grown up in a better place or time. Nowhere could there have been better people to nurture a young boy, a young man and now an old man."

Dr. Himes graduated from Hartford High School in 1950 and earned his bachelor's degree in history and political science from Kentucky Wesleyan College in 1959. He earned a master's degree in social science from Appalachian State University in 1961, did other graduate work at Western Kentucky University, and did his doctoral studies at Vanderbilt University. He also wore our country's uniform for 4 years in the U.S. Air Force, serving in the Korean War.

Dr. Himes's renown as a teacher was legendary. Several years ago I was on a plane from Kentucky to Washington, DC, when a young woman introduced herself to me as one of his former students. She had only the highest praise for him. I made sure to tell Dr. Himes about that afterwards. The impact he had on this young woman's life, and thousands of young people's lives, cannot be understated.

Let me point out that my wife, Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao, was a big fan of Dr. Himes as well. When she first met him she was new to Kentucky and just getting to know people. Dr. Himes was so friendly and helpful, they soon became fast friends. He was a great guide to the people and places in Kentucky.

Dr. Himes was always actively engaged with the world around him, and so it is no surprise he was involved in political campaigning and public service as well. His first campaign experience came when he was in the third grade at Wayland Alexander Elementary School he supported Wendell L. Willkie in the 1940 Presidential election.

Luckily, that first loss did not deter him from politics completely. Moving to Taylor County, KY, in 1961, Dr. Himes went on to serve in leadership posts for local campaigns. He then became chairman of the Taylor County Republican Party in 1982, a position he held for 10 years.

Dr. Himes was twice named the Campbellsville/Taylor County Chamber of Commerce Educator of the Year. He was also named the 2001 Business and Professional Women's Club Man of the Year and the 2004 Central Kentucky News-Journal Man of the Year. He received the Outstanding Social Studies Teacher Award from the Kentucky Council for the Social Studies in 1982.

Dr. Himes was a member of Campbellsville Baptist Church, and he belonged to the Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels. He was perhaps the biggest fan of Lady Tiger Basketball at Campbellsville University, and the team recognized his support by creating the Bobby Himes Award, which honors dedication, determination and loyalty.

Dr. Himes served under five Presidents during his tenure at Campbellsville University. Dr. Michael V. Carter, the current president, said upon hearing the news, "We thank God for the life and career of Dr. Bobby Himes and his service to Campbellsville University and humanity."

My prayers and those of the people of Kentucky are with his wife Erlene and the Himes family after this sad loss. I hope the wonderful memories of Dr. Himes's long and fruitful life can give them some strength during this difficult time.

In his book, Dr. Himes looked back at his own success and wrote, "What a career, what a life for a rural Kentucky boy! My granddad Himes would be pleased."

What a life, indeed. Kentucky and our Nation have lost a great American with the passing of Dr. Bobby R. Himes. And I have lost a dear beloved friend.

#### VOTE EXPLANATIONS

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, last night my flight to Washington was diverted to Columbus, OH, due to bad weather. As a result, I missed rollcall vote No. 163, to invoke cloture on the motion to concur with House amendment No. 2 to the Senate amendments to the housing bill. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, last night, due to weather delays and an unexpected flight diversion to Columbus, OH, I missed the rollcall vote concerning cloture on the motion to concur with House amendment No. 2 to the Senate amendments to the housing bill, H.R. 3221. Had I been present for this vote, I would have voted "aye."

#### REMEMBERING SENATOR JESSE HELMS

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I was saddened by the news of the death of our former colleague, Jesse Helms of North Carolina. It was a privilege to work with him when he served as chairman of the Agriculture Committee. He was always courteous and respectful of the interests of all of the members of the committee. His conscientious efforts to be fair and resourceful in achieving a consensus on the provisions of legislation providing Federal Government support for the producers of food and fiber were deeply appreciated by me as a Senator from the State of Mississippi, which is so heavily dependent on farming and agribusiness.

I also admired his warmhearted and friendly manner. He was the epitome of the Southern gentleman. He was forceful and combative in his arguments in support of the issues he believed in, and he was never afraid to say what he thought, even though he knew he might not be supporting the prevailing view.

His wife Dot was one of the most precious Senate Wives Club members. My

heartfelt sympathies go out to her and all the members of the family of our departed colleague.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to a great patriot—and a good friend—who passed away on our Nation's Independence Day.

It seems somehow so fitting that Senator Jesse Helms should have left us on July 4, the anniversary of America's foundational document. Senator Helms was, above all else, a patriot who loved his country and the ideals we embody as a nation. And he spent his entire adult life defending those ideals, beginning with his service in the U.S. Navy in World War II.

Jesse always fought for what he believed in, even at great personal—or political—cost. Two things friends and foes alike acknowledged, and admired, about Senator Helms were that you always knew where he stood and that his word was as good as gold. He was a man of enormous integrity, as all who dealt with him on a personal and professional level can testify.

While he was a formidable politician, there were some things that, for Jesse, were more important than political success or winning elections.

He spent much of his three decades in the Senate standing up for the principles he believed so deeply in, even if that meant taking on powerful opposition, sometimes in his own party. But as Jesse famously said, "I didn't come to Washington to be a 'yes man' for any president, Democrat or Republican . . . I didn't come to Washington to get along and win any popularity contests."

What he did win in Washington was the enduring affection of people on both sides of the political aisle who found that this tough-as-nails politician was also a gracious, generous, compassionate human being. As Linda Chavez so aptly said in tribute to Senator Helms, "he took his politics seriously, but he didn't use political differences as an excuse for bad manners." He embodied southern charm, good manners, and courtliness. He seemed to recognize that there is never a contradiction between standing up strongly for your political and philosophical principles and always treating people, including those who disagree with you, in a way that always respects their human dignity.

Nor was this just a public display of good manners—Jesse Helms' Christian charity extended to his private life as well. Having been active in the pro-life movement for a long time I can't tell you how many times I have heard the accusation that pro-lifers only care about life from conception to birth—after that, they have no interest in caring for their fellow human beings.

Well, suffice it to say that Senator Helms disproved this caricature. Jesse and his wife Dot were always what I like to call "pro-life and whole-life." In 1963, after 21 years of marriage, they adopted a disabled child, their son Charles, after they read a newspaper

article in which the child, who was 9 at the time, wished for a mother and a father for Christmas. Senator Helms never used adopting a child with cerebral palsy to soften his image as a hard, uncaring right-wing ideologue—in fact, he refused to talk about it in interviews. But Charles was, he said, a great blessing and was the center of his family. He served for years on the boards of private charities to help others with cerebral palsy.

For those young people who had the opportunity to work with him, he was a wonderful mentor. More than anything else, he loved to talk to young people, give them guidance and encouragement, and show them the ropes of public service. Those who knew the dynamics of his office testified that he was always more accessible to young people than he was to high-powered lobbyists. One of his great legacies is the Jesse Helms Center near his hometown of Monroe, NC, an organization centered on young people and dedicated to assuring that future generations fully understand and appreciate the blessing and opportunities of this great country.

What is perhaps most obvious about Senator Helms was that he was, simply put, a political giant. He was among the first to take up the pro-life cause in Congress, and his dedication to that cause never wavered. He was a lifelong opponent of communist tyranny, and his leadership in key Cold War battles was indispensable. Ronald Reagan could never have achieved all that he did achieve without Senator Helms' strong and steady leadership as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee.

And that was not all the Reagan revolution owed to Jesse Helms. Like Ronald Reagan, he left the Democratic Party after many years as a Democrat because he believed it no longer embodied the principles he believed in. He was on the cutting edge of transforming the solid south from the Roosevelt coalition to the Reagan coalition. His support for Ronald Reagan in his State's primary in 1976 was the key to Reagan's victory, and the beginning of the revival of his fortunes that led to the Reagan landslides of 1980 and 1984.

Senator Helms' political leadership will be missed, but his impact on our Nation will remain as his lasting legacy. We mourn the passing of this great American, and we offer our heartfelt condolences to his family, his friends, and to the people of his beloved North Carolina and across the Nation who loved him.

#### HEALTHY AMERICANS ACT

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I stand today for the 47 million Americans who are uninsured and looking to Congress to address an issue that has reached critical proportions.

I stand for the millions of Americans who are underinsured and cannot afford to pay the difference between their